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Hugh Cecil Earl of Lonsdale.

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Dr. Silvester. M.D

with the kind Regards of the Writer

OUR SADDLE HORSES.

BY

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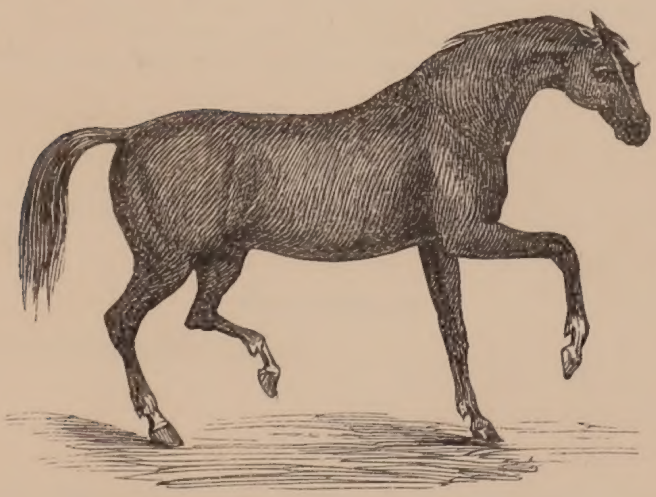

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OUR SADDLE HORSES.

CHAPTER I.

Alleged deterioration of English racehorses, and consequent degeneration of our breed of useful horses—Subject has been discussed in Parliament and in periodic and daily press—Its importance in national and social point of view.

The questions whether our racehorses still maintain their supremacy, and whether the breed of useful horses has degenerated, have been agitated, with more or less energy, for the last fifty years. This interesting subject now occupies national attention, and has been discussed in Parliament and by the daily and periodic press. The discussion may be said to have been renewed in a letter addressed to the Speaker of the House of Commons, by Mr. Dickinson,* of the New Forest, who, in an experience of fifty years, has purchased and possessed more horses than any man in Europe. The attention of the House of Commons was incidentally called to the subject on the discussion raised by Mr. Percy Wyndham respecting the Queen's Plates, when Lord Palmerston engaged that the matter should be considered by the Master of the

* Afterwards published in *Journal of Royal Agricultural Society*, vol. 24, part 2.

Horse. No one denies its importance in a national point of view, and it is connected directly, or indirectly, with the daily life of every Englishman. In no age has the idea of perfection been more diligently sought, and the particular aim of the present age is to attain perfection, and to combine beauty and utility. Exhibitions, museums, collections of fine art, academies, associations, clubs, races, fairs, the opening of railways, the allotment of prizes for any improvement, the launch of the mail-clad *Warrior* of the deep, implements of war altered as if superhuman powers had been at work in our arsenals, so that the cannon and muskets with which Nelson and Wellington gained their victories are toys, in comparison with the newly-discovered ordnance and arms of precision now employed—all these are testimonies to the principle of IMPROVEMENT. Controversies exist on many of these things, and it is not wonderful that there should be opposing opinions on the particular subject on which I now write. In every science, art, calling, and occupation, there is a standard of perfection at which men aim; and, accordingly, in the breeding of horses, we take a certain form as the model of the horse, as we regard certain forms as models of the human race. We all want good horses, but then we have to decide how we are to obtain a good horse.

Mr. Dickinson's remarks apply to the last fifty years, at the first part of which period pictures of Flying Childers and Eclipse, horses then considered the standards of excellence, had a household place in every home and inn in England. If we think of the changes which during that time have taken place in the social circumstances of England, dating even from the era of the Reform Bill, it is well to inquire in what way the English horse has been affected by those changes, and to what extent the altered style of racing has affected the character of the racer which stamps the intermediate breeds.

Mr. Dickinson asserts that the breed of thoroughbred

horses has not improved while great progress has been made in the breed of cattle and sheep, and even pigs. He contends that the present turf system—the introduction of short races and running young horses—has caused the deterioration of our thoroughbred horses, and consequently of the horses of every-day use; and to retrieve the character of the national horse, suggests a restoration of the conditions of higher weights and longer distances formerly attached to the Royal Plates bestowed for the national object of improving the general breed of horses.

As might be expected, many of the individuals composing what is called the turf, do not accept with pleasure Mr. Dickinson's remonstrances. He says:—

"Every person who has seen the great change which has taken place in the quality of the animals produced throughout England, Ireland, and Scotland (horses only excepted), will admit that the improvement in them is marvellous; while horses alone have become deteriorated almost in the same degree. Why is this? It is because they have all had more care bestowed on them: the production even of pigs has been more actively cared for than the breeding of thoroughbred horses, except by racing men for racing purposes." . . . . .

"Formerly the Royal Plates of 100*l.* each were given for competition all over England for four-year-old horses carrying 10 stone 4 lbs., five-year-old, 11 stone 6 lbs., six and aged, 12 stone, and decided in four-mile heats. These prizes were a great inducement to breeders to endeavour to get horses of size and substance, and to keep them when got. As long as these Royal Plates were given to horses carrying these high weights, strong thoroughbred horses were bred and kept, which in the end broke down, and became the most valuable acquisition to breeders of horses in all parts of the country." . . . . .

"Our horses were then the envy of the whole of Europe.

These Royal Plates for high weights and long distances brought up our horses to this point of excellence; so long as they were so given, so long we kept our supremacy; but, by some unfortunate influence, the conditions were altered, and lighter weights and shorter distances allowed. From this point I date, under my own observation, the commencement of the deterioration of our thoroughbred horses, and consequently of those of every-day use." . . . . . "The best horse ever produced in England could not race at two nor at three years old; he was not only the fastest and the stoutest of any period, but he was one of the most powerful—this horse was Eclipse. If he had been of these days, in all probability his fate would have been sealed at three years old; he would have been sold as a great slow brute to some foreigner, coming among us to make such purchases at a small sum, as most of our large-sized, unfurnished horses have been, till there is hardly one left. Since there is nothing further to run for at four years old, they must be sold. I can speak positively from my own knowledge to this state of things; the alteration of these plates and other turf arrangements have combined to produce quite another class of racehorse,—a slippery, slender, small horse, that comes quickly to perfection, and as quickly passes away.

"The adoption of handicaps at all country races is another evil; nearly all the important races are handicaps, instead of weight for age. This tends to make all horses equal, and give to all, good or bad, an equal chance of winning: speed is substituted for substance; horses are tried at two years old for speed; if slow they are cast, and the expense of training stopped. This promotes sport and produces betting; and therefore answers the purpose of the sportsmen, but it is ruinous to the national supply of horses."

Admiral Rous, though differing from Mr. Dickinson, says, "What we require is a National Prize of 5,000*l.* to be run for

by four-year-olds and upwards, three miles; which might induce horse-owners to show more mercy to the young horses."* The want of mercy to the young horse trained for racing is thus admitted: and this at least is certain, that, as the racer cannot, like the cart-horse, be kept as a distinct class apart, but, on the contrary, is considered the standard of excellence, and as such resorted to in the breeding of horses, the national horse is the inheritor of the racer's qualities, whether good or bad.

A good many points have been elicited in the controversy, and, so far as it has gone, it has procured the admission that the proper culture of horses is not to be sought in horse-racing as now carried on. Racing men, in attempting to defend, have furnished the strongest arguments against, the present turf system. Admiral Rous, considered the first authority in England in regard to racing, distinctly tells us that the destruction of horses is owing to early training.† It could not be otherwise, for it is impossible to force nature and alter the constitution of the horse in order to suit the fashion of the day without injuring the animal. The premature and excessive exertions to which two-year-old horses are now forced produce premature debility and some defect or other in the feet and legs. The horse does not come to maturity until he is between six and eight years old, and if cherished, as reason and self-interest dictate, would last till he is twenty. But, in defiance of nature, the racer, while immature, and at two years old, has his powers so over-taxed and strained by the system of training, that at four years old, only half advanced to maturity in age, he is prematurely worn, and his career as a working horse is concluded.

A public writer,‡ in referring to the effects of training

* Admiral Rous to Sir R. Peel, June 4th, 1864. In *The Times* of 6th June.
† *Ibid.* ‡ "Oxonian," in *Times* of 12th September, 1864.

two-year-olds, has affirmed "that most of our racehorses break down before they are six years old." He states he is "one who for several years had a great deal to do with racing in India, and superintended the training of many horses for the turf there. The first thing that strikes such a one on his return to this country is the excessive weediness, rickety appearance, and want of stamina of the racehorses of the English turf. . . . . In India no man of any knowledge of horses would think of putting any horse into training at two years old, nor of subjecting a three-year-old to a severe preparation."

CHAPTER II.

The racer worked too young is thereby injured in constitution and form—Owing to present turf system, he has the single quality of fleetness, and is not the desirable horse—As a weak horse he has feeble progeny, and the intermediate breeds are thus affected.

The system of the present day is stated and defended in the sense that the speed of racehorses is at no time greater than at two years old, and that the employment of young horses on the turf is founded on the same principle that induces a farmer to bring his sheep of thirteen months old to the market. The "principle" is the money principle—the spirit of the system,—quick returns to pay the training bill, with an utter disregard of the horse and the real service he should render to man. The horse at two years old is to win money for his owner, and then is probably exhausted by the preparation; or if he does not prove a winner, he is almost valueless. But, apart from the money element, instead of there being a similarity, there is a wide difference between the cases of the two animals. In the noble animal we require hard bone, firm muscle and flesh, with powers developed with patience, so as to fit him for the work of years; in the other we require only good and tender flesh to supply one day's wants. Young meat may perhaps nourish the human body as well as the flesh of the more matured animal does, and there may be no harm in forcing meat in order to bring it early to the market; but forced and exhausting work to bring

the horse at two years old to the starting-post, is a very different affair, and ought not to find favour with the true lover of the horse. It is a practice at once cruel and absurd. It is not the union of the qualities of form, strength, endurance, and speed that is sought by the present system; but the single quality of momentary speed in the immature horse, to which everything else is subordinated. A reformed system would enable us to breed good horses instead of bad, while altered average speed of racehorses would not prevent the gentlemen on the turf from winning and losing money with the same facility as at present. The racehorse is worked too young, and thereby injured; and, as a weak horse, he has feeble progeny.

So much for the constitution of the racer as it is affected by the system of racing: and now as to his action, which, employing the Demosthenic saying, is the first, second, and third quality required in the horse. What is aimed at in the racer, and what is at length acquired by that distinct class of horse always going fast on smooth turf, is the reverse of what we aim at in the saddle horse, hunter, carriage horse, and cavalry horse. The racer in action skims the ground with a straight leg, the object being speed on smooth turf. He is to pass from one point to another in the shortest possible time, the convenience and comfort of the rider not being thought of; and when he does walk, he shaves the ground with his hoof. Such an animal is a rarity in itself. Mere speed is not the property required in a good horse. In a good saddle horse we require, for safety and comfort, a shorter and more active stroke than that of the racer, the bending knee, the foot slightly drawn in when being put down, and the springing out from the loins, with power there in reserve—a quality essential to safety and buoyancy, but which is at last lost by the racer always violently and unreservedly impelled forward. The good saddle horse is well on his haunches, will spring at

once into his canter on a conventional signal between him and his rider, and, when pulled up by him, will stop light and dead short. The tendency of horse-racing as now carried on is to spoil the horse for all purposes of daily use, by deteriorating his constitution, and cultivating action the opposite of what we require in every horse but the racer. Here is the evidence of a racing man respecting a distinguished sire of the day:—"Orlando went with a straight knee. He won four races at two years old, five times at three years old; never ran as a four-year-old, having hit his leg; and broke down when he started as a five-year-old for the Ascot Cup. . . . . But, apart from racing, that he has benefited the breed of horses I very much doubt. Many of his fillies were very weedy; few of his sons promise to be sires of stout, good-sized stock." *

Another public writer † has asserted that "out of the 2,000 thoroughbred horses annually foaled in England, few possess the slightest claim to stoutness," and has challenged Admiral Rous and General Peel to "claim more than the ridiculously small proportion of two out of those 2,000 as first-rate horses." This testimony will be generally accepted as true; and are we for ever to adhere to a system yielding such miserable results? We may retain a national pastime, and yet improve the breed of horses.

"It cannot be denied that racing brings very many evils in its train, and that it is only on the ground of the public benefit it confers that it deserves the patronage of Royalty or of grave and thoughtful men," is a statement in an article on "English Horses," in the *Edinburgh Review* of July last (p. 143); but as to "the public benefit," one must on that point differ from the accomplished writer. It may to some persons be a novelty to hear that one of those "many evils"

* *Bailey's Magazine*, February, 1864, pp. 307, 309.

† J. H. Shorthouse, in *The Times* of the 24th of August, 1864.

is the deterioration of English horses; but let the reasonable people of England exercise their reason, and they will be disabused of the illusion that the present system of racing tends to improve the national horse.

The Times, in an article on the last Derby, said that the race was the "pretence of the enormous gathering, and that nine-tenths were in happy ignorance as to the horses." It is quite true that we do not associate the ideas of knowledge of the horse, or real interest in his condition, with the objects which bring together those great gatherings.

Then there is the question as to what constitutes the thoroughbred horse. It is said that the Duke of Marlborough derived his knowledge of history from Shakspeare. Many with heart and mind cleave to the character of Mary Queen of Scots as delineated in *The Abbot*, and they may be in the right. Most people take their opinion of the Arab horse and Arab man, not from real life, but from romance; and there they are decidedly in the wrong. In Arabia there are brutes of horses, and accomplished villains of men to whom the character of hospitality and fidelity are grievously misapplied. The present Lord Albemarle, in his travels overland from Bussorah, in Arabia, to England, refers to one of those villains in the following description; and his delineation comes directly within the knowledge of the writer of this note:—"Not many weeks before we saw this Moolah Ali, an Arab, though he wore the Persian dress, he was one of the principal persons of Mendali, a Turkish town near the frontier. In those days he was the bosom friend of Davoud Pasha, 'his best of cut-throats,' and most willing instrument of assassination. It was during his intimacy with the Pasha, that, on the day of some religious festival, he invited sixteen persons to a feast, and placing a confidential agent between each guest, caused every one of them to be put to death, himself

giving the signal of slaughter by plunging a dagger into the breast of the person beside him." *

The pedigree of the Arabian horse is a legend. To the traveller in Arabia and Persia pedigree is never mentioned. No doubt the Oriental aptitude for (I will not say lies, but) invention would furnish, if required, the pedigree of any horse offered for sale, tracing with perfect exactitude its descent from any particular horse used by Solomon or by Job. But the Arabs, scattered into various tribes which are often in hostility to each other, know nothing of the pedigree of horses in this sense.

The term thoroughbred, as applied to horses, is very arbitrary, and calculated to mislead, looking to practical results in horse-breeding. It is generally used to denote pedigree in connection with racing, the racer being the standard of supposed perfection in the horse; so that speed has been regarded as the only necessary quality, to which everything else has been sacrificed. And yet the date of the pedigree of our thoroughbred horse commences, not from the days of Job or Solomon, or even the days of chivalry, the days of the spur and the sword, but within a hundred years. Where is the pedigree of the Godolphin Arabian bought out of a water-carrier's cart in Paris?—an Arabian, by the by, which was no Arab, if the pictures of him are a correct representation. The Arabian horse, certainly the Arab of Bahrein, the Isle of Pearls, the most highly prized in India of all Arab horses forty and fifty years ago, was never seen with a forehand such as that of the so-called Arabian. The tendency of the Arab horse is to be low in the forehand. I have ridden from Bussorah, where the Euphrates and Tigris unite, through the horse-breeding countries of Arabia, looking at the horse with the eyes of inquiry, and in the whole of such

* Keppel's *Travels*.

countries I never saw an animal bearing resemblance in shape to the Godolphin Arabian. That he was a Barb there is no doubt, as we shall presently see.

The greyhound, like the horse, comes from the East. Admiral Rous admirably describes what culture has done in producing the Anglo-Arabian horse ; and if he had seen the greyhound used in Arabia, we might have had from him a comparative description of the Arabian greyhound and the Anglo-Arabian greyhound, which would afford another example of the principle of improvement and the different results of wrong and right culture. The Arab Bey, fond of falconry, uses the greyhound in this sport on his plains. The falcon is taught to light upon the head of the antelope, and diminish his speed by annoyance, until the greyhound is able to overtake him. The Arab values and cultivates the greyhound for this sport, and in the desert there may be seen greyhounds clothed with the same care as the Arab horse. But while the Arab greyhound remains a comparatively soft and feeble creature, with silken hair on his ears and tail, the Anglo-Arabian greyhound has become, by judicious crossing, a swifter and stronger animal than the Arabian, and that marvel of beauty and power that delights our eyes in England.

The Bahrein Arab horses, though valued above all others for their powers of endurance, are the smallest of all Arab horses. The influence of soil and climate in respect to the development of the frame of the horse is also exemplified at the Cape. Like all grape-growing countries, it is well suited to the constitution of the horse, but the tendency of that country is rapidly to diminish the size of the horse, while oxen attain a size and beauty unknown in other parts of the world, but with strength not commensurate with their size. Hence we deduce that a country propitious to the spirit and constitution of the horse, is not always propitious to his size ; that the mere size to which young horses may be forced is not

of primary importance; that if climate does something for the horse, judicious culture does still more; and that almost any country—certainly this country, which, through its wealth, commands every advantage except that of uniform temperature—may, by care, advance in the improvement of the horse. Indeed, the superiority of the English breed of horses over their progenitors has been settled.

CHAPTER III.

Glance at the history of the English horse.

In recent references to the history of the horse, the history which gives us the true knowledge of the origin of things has been overlooked, and we find a clever writer saying with hesitation, "The East is the probable home of the horse." * The genuine and original country of the horse was where Noah collected the animal tribes and selected them for preservation; but we need not go into that question, for we are warranted in saying that where the ark rested, namely, the region about Ararat, a fruitful and nearly central part of the earth, was the starting-point of the postdiluvian horse. In the year of the world 1657, the horse stepped from the ark in primeval strength and beauty—an event allegorized by the Greeks in the legend that Neptune struck the earth with his trident, and a horse appeared. The horse was then perfectly domesticated, and no subjugation in the sense of taming was required, as by some has been so strangely supposed. The horse, if he escapes from the culture of man, rapidly loses the elegance and grace which had before characterized him; but he was not originally a savage animal, and his use is probably coëval with mankind. For 600 years before the flood, Noah had been a member of a social state of which this much is made known to us:—There was the simplicity of pastoral life with

* *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1864, p. 131.

its innocence and peace ; but there were also cities (the city of Enoch), and the arts and embellishments of life, the harp and the organ. Artificial music had been devised, and metallurgy had been invented. The giants of those days explored the depths of the mine, and stood by the roar of the furnace working iron and brass. Cities were built ; and fair, seductive women, and dauntless men projecting their schemes of enterprise and violence, were there. From the dim traditions of this period the Grecian fables, so celebrated in poetry, derived their origin. Can it be thought that the horse was neglected in a state of society which the days of latest civilization will resemble ? That generation, with its beauty, its genius, its valour, and its crimes, went down to the tomb in one hour ; but its arts and inventions were recollected and revived by Noah and his sons. The early development of arts and sciences, and the establishment of organized governments, are thus accounted for, and it is false to ascribe the invention of the arts and sciences to chimerical persons much posterior to the deluge.* A hundred years after the deluge the several families of the earth had journeyed from the East, and found a plain in the land of Shinar, and desiring to settle and to centralise, "dwelt there and built a city and a tower." The progress of population was rapid. Horses had multiplied ; and Herodotus informs us that horses and carriages could pass each other on the winding ascent outside of that tower. The statement refers to the breadth of the ascent, and riders are not mentioned ; but as it is easier to break the horse to riding than drawing, riding was first practised. Rollin observes that the Scripture does not say that the tower was overthrown at the dispersion. It remained until Nimrod got possession of the place, and its ruins are still called Birs Nimroud. The route traversed by the horse journeying from

* See *Rollin's Ancient History :* "Manners of Assyrians ; Arts and Sciences."

Ararat to the plains of Shinar was taken by the writer of this note. At the foot of the ruins of Birs Nimroud he fell in with an encampment of Arabs, who possessed the handsomest Arab horses he saw in a journey from that spot through Media, Persia, and Armenia, to Ararat and Circassia; at that time in Persia the Arab horse was not only not valued, but despised. From the plains of Shinar—the scene for a time of the universal assemblage of men—the diffusion of men and of horses proceeded. The establishment of the Egyptian monarchy dates from A.M. 1816, while the antediluvian patriarch was still alive; and passages in the history of Abraham, Joseph, and Moses attest that a perfect polity reigned in the court and kingdom, and that an army of cavalry, foot, and armed chariots was maintained. There was, therefore, only an interval of 159 years between the two points of time, when Noah took possession of the new earth, and the establishment of that kingdom to which we are most indebted in respect to the horse, and in which he was cultivated with a care and success probably never since equalled. How closely connected with the history of the present race of men these events of a previous social state appear. 159 years look like a brief period for the increase of horses from two to the number required for the court, cavalry, and people of a monarchy: the numbers are wonderful and true, notwithstanding the Colenso arithmetic. Las Cases tells us that a discussion took place at St. Helena, about the increase of mankind. Napoleon made him sit down and calculate the arithmetical increase, and it was obliged to be admitted that no calculation could be brought to refute the Biblical account, which is in full accordance with nature.*

Rollin, in his ancient history of the Egyptians, says:—"The Scripture, in several places, speaks advantageously of

* *Journal at St. Helena*, vol. iii. part vi., p. 180.

their cavalry. Horse and chariot races were performed in Egypt with wonderful agility, and the world could not show better horsemen than the Egyptians." It was not from Arabia, but out of Egypt (1 Kings, x., 28, 29) that Solomon purchased horses to supply his 40,000 stalls; and Egyptian horses were so noted for their beauty, that the beauty of a woman was by him compared to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. The comparison may not seem to us in this country at first apparent, but the illustration combines the forms of beauty, stateliness, and delicacy. Helen, the finest woman in the universe, was compared to a horse in a Thessalian chariot, by Theocritus.

At an early period, the cavalry of this island was superior, and the Roman legions under Cæsar could not withstand the dread assault of our scythed chariots, impelled by horses managed with extraordinary skill. It is now impossible to trace out this species. On his return to Rome, Cæsar carried with him some of these war horses, to mix with his own. After the Romans had established themselves, they sent over bodies of cavalry to maintain a chain of posts. Until the fourth century, and while Britain remained in possession of the Romans, they had dominion over all that in their pride they owned as the habitable earth, and the conquest of Greece had transferred to them the chief culture of the horse. The Thessalians, the most expert of the Grecian horsemen, and the inhabitants of Argos and of Athens, were colonists from Egypt, and had brought the horse with them. In the eastern branch of their empire, the Romans possessed Greece, Egypt, Thrace, the coast of Africa as far as Tripoli, Syria, and Asia Minor, the countries which produced the beautiful silken-haired courser. From these provinces their cavalry was supplied, and the Roman, as the British horse, was crossed with horses of those provinces. In the fourth century after Christ, 200 Cappadocian horses were sent by the Roman emperor as

the most acceptable present he could offer to a powerful prince of Arabia. In the seventh century, when Mohammed attacked Koreish near Mecca, he had but two horses in his whole army. Gibbon says: — "The sacred lands of Mahomet mounted by turns a train of seventy camels—the camels of Yathreb were formidable in war." The Arabs had then few horses, and those of little value. It is clear, therefore, that for centuries before that part of Arabia, to which we usually refer in connection with the horse, possessed the horse either in numbers or perfection, in Britain the horse, crossed with the Egyptian, Syrian, and Grecian breeds, had attained a high state of excellence.

The Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman kingdoms succeeded each other as sovereign powers. The connection of the kingdom of Nebuchadnezzar with the kingdom of Nimrod is shown in Rollin's *Ancient History*. The very word horse is connected with the history of the second empire, the Medo-Persian—one of whose monarchs, Darius I., obtained the crown by his horse being the first to neigh at a rendezvous of nobles. The Persian was succeeded by the Grecian empire. Of the fourth or Roman empire, Britain, under the name of Britannia Romana, was a province. Each of these four kingdoms succeeded that which had gone before, not in annihilation, but by incorporating the former with itself. After that first journey from Ararat to Shinar, and the memorable event that occurred there, ages rolled away, and dynasties changed. But from the plains of Shinar, step by step, we may follow the horse to the fields of England.

During the Roman domination the culture of the Roman horse in Britain would not cease; but in the unsettled times that succeeded, the horse may have deteriorated. Coming down to later times, Athelstan distinguished himself in attending to the improvement of the horse. He prohibited the exportation of horses,—an enactment which proves that

English horses were valued abroad. The Crusades were the means of introducing many Eastern horses. The enactments of Henry VIII., however arbitrary, certainly tended to improve the breed of horses. James I. introduced Eastern horses into England, and it was in his time that public races were established. Charles II. was a considerable breeder of horses from the Eastern stock, but we know nothing of their pedigree. Cromwell, perceiving with his wonted sagacity how much the improvement of the breed of horses was connected with the prosperity of the country, had a breeding stud. He was the owner of the celebrated White Turk and the Coffin Mare of Eastern blood. Cromwell, who in his battles considered his cavalry his most important arm, well knew the value of shape, action, power, and endurance in the horse. "His mental and bodily energy, his vigorous conceptions, quick decision, and the dread vehemence with which he urged his war steed into the thick of battle, made of him a cavalry leader second to none in history. Indefatigable and active, a good horseman, and perfect master of the broadsword, he had unbounded ascendancy over the minds of his followers, and led them through or over all obstacles that human prowess could surmount." * The Ironsides of our day—our iron squadrons of the deep—perpetuate the designation given to his indomitable hosts of cavalry. William III., a noble soldier and a sportsman, sought the improvement of the horse. In his time the Oglethorpe Arabian and the Byerly Turk were introduced. He established a school for riding. To the last he rode, and even hunted. His favourite, Sorrel, was the last horse he rode. In the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne, the Darley Arabian was introduced. He was a Syrian horse. Twenty years afterwards the Godolphin Arabian was brought to England.

* *Cavalry, its History*, Capt. Nolan, p. 19.

CHAPTER IV.

Origin of our thoroughbred horses.

THERE is no doubt that the English blood breeds of this day are more indebted to the Darley and Godolphin Arabians (so called) than to all the foreign horses which have entered the country. They have produced stock of vast size, bone, and substance, endowed, at the same time, with extraordinary powers of speed and endurance. The descendants of these horses have rendered the English coursers superior to all others. No foreign horses can compete with the descendants of their own blood in this country. The Darley Arabian, bred in the desert of Palmyra, was purchased by Mr. Darley's brother at Aleppo, where he was a mercantile agent. The Darley had every point that could be desired in a horse. No authentic portrait is extant of this celebrated horse, but he lives in his descendants. Flying Childers and Eclipse, reputed as the swiftest of horses, were his son and great grandson. Flying Childers, foaled in 1715, was a chestnut horse, with white upon his nose, and whited all fours. He was fifteen hands high, short backed, and compact. He had no competitor on earth endowed with sufficient speed to come within the reach of his heel. He covered at each bound twenty-five feet. He also leaped ten yards with his rider. According to tradition, his great speed and powers were first discovered in the hunting field; and he did not run till he was rising six years old. Lawrence who knew and loved Eclipse,

remembered the eclipse of the sun in 1764, during which that horse was foaled, and delighted in describing him. He also was a chestnut horse. He was bred by the Duke of Cumberland (of Culloden), and at his death was purchased by Mr. Wildman, who afterwards sold him to Colonel O'Kelly. He was withheld from the course till he was five years old. His hind-quarters appeared higher than his forehand. His shoulder was thick but very extensive, and slanting back. He had considerable length of waist and stood over a great deal of ground, in this respect differing from his relation, Flying Childers. Eclipse never met a horse able to live by his side for fifty yards. His vast strength lay in his loins and shoulders, and when he made one of his tremendous bursts, no man living could hold him. He won eleven King's Plates, the weight for ten of which was twelve stone, the remainder ten. He was never beaten ; never had a whip flourished over him, or felt the touch of the spur. He produced the extraordinary number of 334 winners. Lawrence informs us that many of the Eclipses bent their knees and were remarkably high goers. He was twenty-five years old when he died. Flying Childers and Eclipse were the best and fastest horses England has produced, and afford proof that, with right management, the thoroughbred horse is beyond all question the most useful kind of horse, since he is applicable to every possible service in which horses are used—war, hunting, the road, and quick draught. There cannot be a doubt that Flying Childers and Eclipse derived much of their vast powers from the advantage of having to undergo no debilitating labour until they had attained their full strength, their bones had become consolidated, and their sinews endowed with their utmost tenseness and vigour. Now, some of our best horses, from running at two years old, are destroyed before they are five years old ; but if, like Flying Childers and Eclipse, they had not appeared until that age, they might have shown equal excellence with

those celebrated horses. Are these days so fast, is there so little real love of the horse, that no one will adopt the slower process but more rational treatment with a colt of pure blood and of promise which had such extraordinary results in the case of these two horses? It would answer as a commercial speculation and be a public benefit.

The Godolphin Arabian was imported from France twenty years after the Darley Arabian. The Godolphin was in colour a brown bay, somewhat mottled. He was fifteen hands high, with great strength and symmetry, with the exception of his chest, which rose to a degree of monstrosity. Nature had allowed him an ample measure of every part materially contributing to action. This horse has been considered an Arabian, and to this day is so called; but his figure bears no affinity to the Arab. The Godolphin was still alive when Lawrence, whose knowledge of all subjects connected with the horse was unequalled, was born, and he said it was certain he was imported into France direct from Barbary. So little was he valued in France that he was employed in drawing a cart in the streets of Paris. It has been affirmed that he was sent as a present from the Sultan to Louis XIV.; but is it to be believed that a horse which for his superior qualities had been selected as a present from the most powerful monarch of the East to a powerful monarch of the West, should immediately afterwards, as a young horse, unknown and untried, be found degraded to the drudgery of a cart under the shadow of the palace of that monarch? It was suspected that he was stolen.*

* It has been suggested to the writer that the Godolphin, being a Barb, found his way through Spain into France, it being impossible not to be struck with the resemblance in the portraits of him to Barb horses used in Spain in his time. The suggestion is, that he may have crossed the French frontier as the horse of a captain of contrabandistas, and so got into the hands of Frenchmen as a stray horse, or as one sold cheap, after his rider had fallen in fight, or been taken prisoner, or died. This idea is consistent with the fact that the horse was taken out of a cart in Paris, and that his value was never known in France.

No pedigree was obtained with him, but the statement was that he was foaled in 1724. He was brought to England by Mr. Coke, who gave him to Mr. Williams, proprietor of St. James's Coffee-house, who presented him to Lord Godolphin. Even in England he was for a time a mere castaway, and not considered worthy of a trial as a sire. Joined, through accident, with Roxana, the result was Lath, one of the first horses of that period, and then the Godolphin's excellence was first appreciated. Afterwards he produced a yearly succession of prodigies, and he was, even in a greater degree than the Darley, the founder of the modern thoroughbred horse. He died in 1753, in his twenty-ninth year.

The Wellesley Arabian was a remarkably handsome horse. In the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf the Arabs breed their horses for sale, which are there crossed with the Persian horse. The Wellesley Arabian was of this class, and more bulky than the common Arabian. He was brought from India by the late Lord Cowley, then Mr. Henry Wellesley. He was a beautiful horse, but few of his produce that were trained added much to his reputation.

Hence we see that all the varieties of the Southern horse —Egyptian, Syrian, Persian, Grecian—were mingled with the breeds of this country, and that from such a medley of races our famous English thoroughbred horses have sprung. Critically, the term "thoroughbred," though convenient, is inaccurate, as applied to an animal of mixed breed. In tracing pedigree the search should end in a well-known racer of full blood; but it is impossible that the English thoroughbred horse should be descended from what is termed the pure Southern breed without English mares as dams. Indeed, as to pedigree, it is all confusion. Our best foreign horses came to us without pedigree, and it is unknown from what particular province many of them were imported. Some have been called Arabians and Barbs, or Arabians and Turks, alternately,

adding to the uncertainty of determining the real breed of a horse from the name assigned to him. But it matters not. The question is,—Were their descendants good horses? The Godolphin, whose blood runs in the veins of our best horses and has transmitted to them their best qualities, was a chance horse, and without pedigree. In him the superiority of the Barb horse was proved, and the superiority of the Barb over the Arab horse holds to this day, "According to Abd-el-Kader, the Barb is a superior horse to the Arab; and in the great race in Egypt, described by General Daumas, a Barb of M. de Lesseps beat the best Arab horses that the Pacha could match against him."* This is an important consideration for those who think, as some now do, of importing Arab horses, to restore the qualities lost by our present racehorses.

Confusion has arisen also from substituting romantic tales of Eastern life for facts, and from associating the horse with Arabia to the exclusion of other countries, and from applying the word Arabia in the restricted sense of that division lying on the Red Sea. It is correct to connect the horse with Arabia to this extent. The far-off island of Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf, though utterly ignored in England in speaking of the Arab horse, is included in Arabia; and the limits of Arabia having been enlarged or contracted by various geographers, according to the times in which they wrote, Irak Arabia is now considered as corresponding to ancient Babylonia, in which were the plains of Shinar, where the first distribution of horses began. Arabia's desert-rangers, in the fulfilment of their destiny, have overrun various districts, both of Asia and Africa; but it is comparatively lately that the horse has been naturalized in Arabia Proper, to which, in England, we refer in speaking of the Arab horse. Arabia derived its horses from Egypt subsequently to our possession

* *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1864, p. 130.

of the Egyptian breed of horses. The alleged introduction of our horse from Arabia has particularly engaged the attention of the writer, who, after a short voyage from India, found himself at Muscat, in Arabia, and thence sailed to Bussorah, from which place he travelled by land to the site of Babylon. Is it known with certainty that any of the imported horses, famed as sires, have come from Arabia itself? Horses coming from Turkey are called Arabians; but the Turks have numerous provinces, and in Turkey there is every variety of the southern horse. The human form retains more of its primeval beauty in the Caucasus and the regions of the East not far distant from the Caucasian group of mountains, so thence, also, from the old seats of civilization, horses of the best blood have in later times come. Each species of animal, including intelligent man, sprang from a common stock after his kind. This should be remembered, whether we examine the beautiful Circassian or the pigmy Bushman; the dray horse, or the Shetland pony. The descendants of a dray horse and mare, if exposed generation after generation to cold and starvation, would rapidly diminish in stature to the size of the pony. We are thus taught how much depends on food and culture, and encouraged to act on our knowledge.*

* On this point see Parkinson on *Breeding, and the Management of Live Stock.* Vol. ii., p. 139.

CHAPTER V.

Our riding horses—Our cavalry horses—Remedy for, or preventive of, deterioration of our horses is in the hands of English landholders — Right selection in the breeding of horses, and the constitution and strength of young horses not being injured by premature work, the number of good horses would cease to be small, and we should have horses equal or superior to any horses bred in former times.

More than three thousand years ago, the following sublime description of the perfect horse came from its creative source :—"Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, ha, ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting." The animal that possesses these qualities of intrepidity, spirit and power, and that, facing fire and sword, will carry the warrior to the cannon's mouth, is yet so docile that he will obey not only the gentle hand, but the very wishes of the fair English girl, made known by that real sympathy between the horse and rider of which every horsewoman is conscious. "He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse," is Tennyson's

description of Enoch Arden's love for, and knowledge of, his boat. In an article, written in a forcible and agreeable style, which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of July last, the following remark occurs:—"We may also note, in taking stock of the uses of the horse, and as illustrative of the manners of the day, the wide extent to which the taste for riding now prevails among the fair sex; and, we must add, the very excellent horsemanship displayed by them, often surpassing that of their brothers."* One has the satisfaction of thinking that in advocating the means by which the best English horse is obtained, we add to the safety and pleasure of such riders, and advance the interests of the country. We should then also still more enjoy the fine equestrian sight presented in the park on a fine summer's morning, when we are able to admire the horse as much as we admire the lovely rider and her excellent horsemanship. An animal so courageous, so docile, so useful to man, ought not to have its character altered and impaired by conversion into a mere runner for purposes of racing, by which, not horse culture, but gambling, is promoted. The imperfection of the mere racer does sometimes creep out, and is acknowledged in the terms "weed" and "daisy cutter," which have come to be applied to the horse regarded by some as the model horse. The racer may be defective in some points, low in the forehand or ewe-necked for instance, and yet be fast; but, in the saddle horse, we require the perfect form, to give good hind-leg action as well as good fore-leg action. The perfect saddle horse is faultless in his walk, trot, and canter, and to possess those qualities he must be perfect in shape; and it is only the person who, by some happy accident, has been the owner of such a horse, that has had before him the horse of the true model, and experienced the pleasure of riding one.

* *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1864, p. 115.

Activity, derived from blood, is as necessary in the cavalry horse as strength, and for the combination of activity and strength we must resort to the racehorse, which, from the solidity of his bones, the close texture of his fibres, and the bulk and substance of his tendons, is proportionally the strongest of all horses, and able to carry the highest weights and to endure the greatest stress upon his bodily powers. His superior speed and endurance originate in the superior ductility and elasticity of his muscular fibres; but as these points in the racer, and his strength and constitutional vigour, are deteriorated by the present system of forcing the immature animal, there must be in each succeeding generation a deteriorating effect upon all horses deriving blood from the racer. Hence the national cavalry horse is influenced by the present system. Mr. Dickinson, having visited France, says that the French cavalry horses "have as much improved as ours have been deteriorated;" and the late Captain Nolan, an accomplished cavalry officer, who had served in India in the 15th Hussars, wrote thus in 1853:— "The English cavalry in India is well mounted. On an emergency any one of these Indian regiments would gallop fifty miles in a pursuit, leave few horses behind, and suffer but little from the effects of such exertion. The horses on which they are mounted are small, but powerful. The Arab, the Persian, the Turcoman, the horses from the banks of the Araxes, are all unrivalled as war horses. I have seen a Persian horse, fourteen hands three inches, carrying a man of our regiment, of gigantic proportions, and weighing, in marching order, twenty-two and a half stone. I have seen this horse on the march above alluded to, of eight hundred miles, carrying this enormous weight with ease, and keeping his condition well; at the crossing of the Kistna, a broad, rapid, and dangerous river, the owner of this horse (Private Herne, of C. Troop,) refused to lead the animal into the

ferry-boat to cross, but, saying 'An hussar and his horse should never part company,' he took the water in complete marching order, and the gallant little horse nobly stemmed the tide, and landed his rider safely on the opposite bank.

"What would become of an English cavalry regiment if suddenly required to make a few forced marches, or to keep up a pursuit for a few hundred miles! Their want of power to carry *the* weight, and want of breeding, makes them tire after trotting a few miles on the line of march. Our cavalry horses are feeble; they measure high, but they do so from length of limb, which is weakness, not power. The blood they require is not that of our weedy racehorse (an animal more akin to the greyhound, and bred for speed alone), but it is the blood of the Arab and Persian, to give them that compact form and wiry limb, in which they are wanting.

"Decked out in showy trappings, their riders decorated with feathers and plumes, they look well to the superficial observer; but the English cavalry are not what they should be. If brought fresh into the field of battle, the speed of the horses and the pluck of the men would doubtless achieve great things for the moment; but they could not endure, they could not follow up, they could not come again. All other reforms in our cavalry will be useless unless this important point be looked to. It is building a house on the sand to organize cavalry without good horses. Government alone could work the necessary reform. The rules of our turf encourage speed only, and that for short distances. Horses are bred to meet these requirements, and from these weeds do our horses of the present day inherit their long legs, straight shoulders, weak constitutions, and want of all those qualities for which the English horse of former days was so justly renowned."* The above was published in 1853. In

* *Cavalry, its History,* Captain Nolan, p. 339.

1854, English cavalry, "brought fresh into the field of battle," made the immortal Balaklava charge, in which Captain Nolan himself was killed; while afterwards, in the same campaign, our cavalry horses, wanting in constitutional vigour to enable them to resist hardship, perished in numbers. Besides, our brave men who are required, as on that memorable field, to charge literally up to the "cannon's mouth," should have all the aid a good horse affords, on which their lives may depend.

The ancient adage, that former times were better than the present, has found supporters in the present controversy; and the *Edinburgh Review* of July last shows that the same adage was rife in former times in regard to horses. It implies the admission that the culture of the horse, whether inferior or superior, has not arrived at the attainable standard of excellence. But such complaints were not heard in the days of Eclipse and Flying Childers, when it was thought that those horses had attained the ultimate point of perfection. The writer of that article has shown some timidity in directly expressing the necessary deduction from his statements, yet practically concedes the argument to the deteriorationists. He admits that weeds and "worthless jades are spread broadcast over the land," but considers that we still have within ourselves the means of producing the finest horses in the world. This opinion will be generally concurred in. But if the character of the national horse is to be maintained, or the improvement of the horse to keep pace with the progress to perfection made in other animals, we should look less to the racecourse for the standard of perfection. As to racing, it may be thought that nothing in this world will prevent horses being bred as now with that sole intent, and wanting every quality but speed; and therefore it is to be hoped that the advice given by that writer—that the landowners of England should avail themselves of the advantages they

possess for the systematic breeding of horses for service — will be followed: patriotism and rational self-interest are both motives for the undertaking. The remedy for, or preventive of, deterioration is in their hands. Their possession of parks and paddocks, affording range, shade, and shelter, places them at once in the foreground. But then, of course, the cruel and absurd system of exhausting the horse in its young years must be abandoned for one in accordance with the workings of nature. The number of good horses will then cease to be small, and we shall have horses equal or superior to any horses bred in former times.

Everything, everywhere, from the title of a book to the secret and sudden march of an army, must now attract by sensation; and the literature of the day, which reflects the spirit of the times, comes up, is admired for its vivid colours, and fades in a day. A little work *On the Condition of our Saddle Horses*, published in 1853,* containing much that is excellent, is now forgotten. It touches every point in the present controversy, and ought to be read by every member in the Lords and Commons. The author has these words:— "The wretched quality of the horses on which our cavalry are now mounted.—This has become so striking as to make it a duty to draw the attention of Government to the subject" (p. 2.) "It is the wretched condition of our cavalry which calls on Government so loudly to improve, by its interference, the present supply of our saddle horses, but it would be desirable to see a large class of the community able to buy saddle horses calculated to carry them safely, and for a reasonable price" (p. 41). And at p. 44, "Good saddle horses have long been so scarce with us, that few people know the form of one. Like good pictures, fine forms are best understood where they most abound, it being vain to reason with

* Hatchard.

people upon forms of either art or nature which they have never seen. To understand, however, the best form for a saddle horse, we must not only often see it, but become practically acquainted with the result by frequently riding well-formed horses." In London, the best horses are seen in harness. Is this because the form and action of good saddle horses are not known or not regarded, or because Englishmen sacrifice their love of riding to the desire that their wives and daughters should be drawn by our best horses? But the circumstance shows the paucity of good horses.

The difficulty of providing good horses for the saddle or harness is exemplified in the case of a friend of the writer. He has twelve horses, and of these only three, when first purchased, cost him less than 250*l*. For one harness-horse he paid 500 guineas, but he was considered by many the finest stepper in England. Taken one with another, these horses cost him 300 guineas apiece. These horses might, perhaps, have been picked up at lower prices; but to find them a person must have searched a large extent of country, have spent much time, and encountered many difficulties. These prices are not fancy prices; they show the failure of the present system to supply good saddle horses at a moderate price, and that year by year good hacks are becoming fewer and dearer. On this subject a writer in *Bailey* for the present month, January, says (p. 120):—"It is no argument to point to a nobleman of fashion, or a millionaire aristocrat, and ask you to look at his hack or his carriage horses as a proof that the breed is not deteriorating. Even they are looking all over the country for horses, and, when found, have to pay for them as if there was not another pair in the world." To what is this owing? The least reflection will show that the present turf system, truly described thirty-four years ago as cruel and absurd, is the cause. It is true that

each of the above-mentioned twelve horses possesses the points constituting good saddle horses—the arched neck, the lengthy and slanting shoulder, the straight back, the powerful loins, the bending knee, combined with power, activity, and endurance. Although these excellences are doubtless derived from some (perhaps far distant) ancestor of southern race, perhaps not one of those horses would pass the Heralds' College; but then where will you find twelve racehorses with such a union of good qualities?

Under the name of Queen's Plates, bounties, with a view to maintain the standard excellence of English horses, are paid out of the privy purse; whereas the Government of the country in sanctioning, by such bounties, the present turf system, sanctions in effect a system which is injurious to the horse, and in a national and social point of view detrimental. In *Bailey*, February, 1864 (p. 64), it is stated—"Racing was admitted on all hands to be nearly useless for the propagation of the strong, thoroughbred hunter. . . . . There was nothing to hope from Newmarket."

The promise made by Lord Palmerston that the matters discussed on Mr. Wyndham's motion during last session should be considered, will insure renewed discussion in the coming session of Parliament. That assembly will be fully alive to this subject of national importance, and a regard to facts is all that is required to secure a right decision of the question how far we are sacrificing the usefulness and strength of our horses to the present turf system.

I do not maintain without any qualification that deterioration has taken place in the English horse, inasmuch as we have excellent horses; but this admission does not affect the main points, viz., that the present cruel and irrational system prevents our improving as we ought; and that a process of deterioration is at work without any effort being made to arrest this evil. We are told that there is only one

excellent horse bred in a thousand. That there is a fair proportion of useful horses out of the remaining nine hundred and ninety-nine is contradicted by every one who has powers of observation beyond the admiring but ignorant gaze the antelope-like looking racer attracts, and by the disappointment experienced by those who require good saddle horses. Instead of yielding the better judgment to prevailing fashion, by which we are injuring the horse and abridging our means of enjoyment, let us direct our attention for practical purposes to a system differing from that producing the result of one specimen of excellence in every one thousand horses annually foaled in England. In fact the English horse, and the interests of the English people in the English horse, are sacrificed to the modern turf system, and the public interest loudly demands a change.

Details in regard to the breeding of horses are not within the scope of this memorandum. It is enough to say that, while like produces like in regard to perfection, defects on one side may be neutralized by opposing superiority on the other side: but in regard to horses generally, the chance medley system too extensively prevails. The object of this memorandum is to give, as it is hoped, a right direction to our thoughts in regard to the horse, and to strengthen the opinion which is really entertained, but does not find open vent, that we are hurting the horse.

What, under the present system, must be the loss sustained by society in respect to health and pleasure when from the horse-breeding grounds of England so few horses of an efficient description are obtained? Persons accustomed to riding cannot enjoy good health without that exercise, and there are hundreds in England who feel the force of the truth of the following observation:—"What must be the condition of the hundreds who would wish to see the class of horse for general purposes improved; whose very existence depends upon

the possession of at least a moderately good animal, but who find it impossible to procure even the most miserable impostor at anything under a curate's stipend." * Under a more rational system the art of riding, now limited to our cavalry and those who can afford to keep hunters, would be more generally cultivated. The racing seat is elegant, suitable to the one object of galloping over smooth ground from one point to another, and suitable to the figure, and feather-weight of the rider, who, like his horse, is *sui generis*. But for every other purpose the seat of the cavalry man, founded on the true principles of equitation, is the firm and true seat. He has to do all that the hunter has to do, and much more. He has to fire from horseback going at speed, and to use the sword in single combat, which requires power, grace, and ease in the saddle—the perfection of horsemanship. The head is kept upright and firm, the shoulders flat, the chest open, the loins braced to make the back hollow and the waist to act as a pivot on which the body above the waist moves with ease; and the heels being sunk low, firmness and strength are thereby given to the muscles of the thighs, which, turned inward, take that muscular grasp of the saddle which gives seat, and hand which depends on seat, and makes the horseman one with his horse. That is the true seat for every one but the jockey—the seat for the cavalry soldier engaged in single combat, in which intense readiness and activity of body and mind are required, and the seat for the civilian. But for that kind of work and seat, the long form of going of the racer, unfitting him for uneven ground and short turnings, is utterly unsuited. You require the compact shape, the knee raised for compact and quick action, whereby horse and man compacted together are ready to canter round a post, break into an infantry square,

* Bailey's *Magazine*, February, 1864, p. 278.

leap a wall, or go through it. Horsemanship should form part of the education of every cultured person. The order of knighthood is equestrian; and in strictness, attorneys-general and solicitors-general, before being invested with knighthood, should give evidence that they know how to use the bridle and the spur. In a riding-school the correct principles of riding may be quickly learnt, and in after-life you can practise on those principles. If England was indeed a country of horsemen, as we fondly style ourselves, riding-schools would be maintained in every city or large town; but we acquiesce in the system which contemptuously hands over to us the refuse of the turf, and our young men wear Zouave trowsers and shoes and stockings. Some persons affect to despise riding-schools, but those who have profited by instruction are well aware of its advantages. Of course the efficiency of a riding-school depends as much upon its horses as its master. There must be horses of all sorts, not only the steady, but horses requiring restraint. What pleasure and health would be obtained by an occasional tour on horseback in our beautiful country! Pennant, who has written so excellently about the horse, performed his journeys on horseback. He considered the absolute resignation of one's person to the luxury of a carriage to forebode a very short interval between that and the vehicle which is to convey us to our last stage.* Sydenham, the modern Hippocrates, said that riding on horseback was the best sort of exercise, and so advantageous that if any person was master of so effectual a remedy, and possessed at the same time the means of concealing it, he might easily make a fortune. The effects of this exercise, too, are to keep the mind clear, and the spirits in a state fit for the vigorous exertion of the intellectual faculties. Riding is, therefore, peculiarly suited to the present

* *Quarterly Review*, July 1864. *The Land we Live In—Travelling in England*, page 212.

age, in which intense mental exertion is required of persons engaged in business or literary pursuits. Unfortunately, however, owing to the misuse of horses to purposes of gambling, a knowledge and love of horses is often considered connected with pursuits disconnected with studious life and habits of business; but this is a mistaken view. It is probably owing to his perseverance in *l'habitude du cheval* that Lord Palmerston continues to enjoy elastic spirits and unabated energy.

Farmers who breed horses are concerned in the present question, for racing is considered principally valuable as connected with breeding and as the test of breeding. It was for the benefit of agriculturists that, in 1831, an excellent work, *The Horse*, was published under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the chairman of the committee being Lord Brougham, and the vice-chairman Lord Russell. In that work the following passage occurs (p. 146): "There cannot be a severer satire on the English nation than that, from the absurd practice of running our racehorses at two and three years old, and working others in various ways long before their limbs are knit, or their strength come, and cruelly exacting from them services far beyond their powers, their age does not average a sixth part of that of the last-mentioned horse. The scientific author of the *Animal Kingdom* declares that it may be safely asserted that more horses are consumed in England in every ten years, than in any other country in the world in ten times that period, except those which perish in war."

"This point has with the English been too long considered as one of mere profit and loss; and it has been thought to be cheaper to bring the young horse early into work, and in a short time to exhaust his whole strength, than to maintain him for a long period, and at considerable expense, almost useless. The matter requires much consideration, and we

think much reformation too." Now has there since been reformation, or have we gone on from bad to worse? And even as to profit and loss, is it legitimate profit and loss, in the way of breeding horses for manly exercise and for the service of the nation, or profit and loss in gambling at the expense of the horse and the nation? Would not our farmers be better remunerated by breeding good horses instead of bad? The subject of racing was considered by the Lords and Commons of England in 1844, in committees on gaming; and that sinister word "gaming," thus connected or considered synonymous with horse-racing, depicts the whole system.

The speed, the power, the blood, the harmony of proportion, and general beauty of the true racehorse are admitted: his pliable sinews and the elasticity of his muscles, if united with the bending knee, make him the paragon of horses. If he bends the knee, resort to him. But if he goes with a straight leg, beware of him as a sire, even if he has won the Derby, the Ascot Cup, and the St. Leger. *Nascitur non fit* is absolutely true of action. It depends upon the manner in which the body is formed, and form is unalterably fixed. The most accomplished horseman on earth cannot make the horse that has inherited the straight-legged action of the deer habitually bend his knee, and walk, trot, or canter to the satisfaction of the rider.

The writer just referred to says, that "with first-class horses, as with first-class men, there are certain qualities leading to excellence not transmissive by blood alone, and wholly independent of mere shape and make." This statement is in the sense of negation, whereas the result is almost positive, as it depends upon selection at will. Doubtless the horse has moral as well as physical qualities; and these qualities are, by proper selection of horses, within command of the breeder. Unions in human life are not made by

selection of moral and physical qualities with a view to posterity, but result from complex thoughts and circumstances; whereas the progeny of the horse may depend upon the will of man, and the desired excellences may, by selection, be transmitted.

It is a subject of congratulation to Englishmen that the Prince of Wales is an approved and excellent horseman; and the country would gratefully acknowledge its obligation to his Royal Highness in leading or countenancing the movement for improving the breed of horses, and obtaining that description of horse which an exclusive regard to the race-course has made scarce.

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